

MAINE READING FIRST

Local MAINE READING FIRST Grant

Request for Proposals
(#G1205024)



Maine Department of Education
Center for Inquiry on Literacy
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

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Introduction

The Maine Department of Education (MDOE) has received funds through the federal READING FIRST Initiative for the purpose of ensuring that all Maine children read well by the end of third grade. According to the requirements of READING FIRST, the MDOE will conduct a competitive process to select and award local reading improvement grants to K-3 schools from eligible districts. The goals of Maine Reading First include:

1. Ensuring that as many Maine students as possible are able to read effectively by the end of third grade as a result of implementing scientifically based reading instruction, interventions, and assessments;
2. Providing ongoing professional development to K-3 regular educators and K-12 special educators to assist them in incorporating scientifically based reading instruction and assessment practices that support the 5 essential elements of reading instruction, namely: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension;
3. Providing assistance to local educational agencies in developing and implementing effective instructional materials, programs, learning frameworks, and strategies that address the 5 essential elements of reading instruction; and
4. Providing assistance to local educational agencies in selecting and/or administering screening, diagnostic, classroom-based, and progress monitoring reading assessments.

Local schools will accomplish the goals of Maine Reading First through each of the following activities:

- Monitoring of site-based grant activities through a local Reading First Leadership Team and the use of valid, reliable assessments.
- On-site support for implementation of professional development through the services of Maine Reading First consultants and on-site, full-time Literacy Coaches who teach, model, and coach teachers in scientifically based reading practices.
- Full staff participation in professional development based on scientifically based reading research (SBRR) in the 5 essential elements of reading instruction.

Maine Reading First funds will be distributed to quality proposals that show the most promise for successful implementation, particularly at the classroom level, and for raising student achievement. It is critical that the proposal of each applicant:

1. Demonstrates a deep understanding of the 5 essential elements of effective reading programs,
2. Establishes that the proposed Reading First activities will operate in a coherent, seamless fashion,
3. Details how all Reading First activities incorporate scientifically based reading research, and
4. Addresses each of Maine's Reading First goals.

The following pages contain a description of the application process and the requirements for completing an application for funds under the Maine Reading First guidelines.

Maine Reading First Subgrant Guidance

A. Reading First—Purposes and Components

1. What is the purpose of the Reading First Program?

The purpose of Reading First is to ensure that all children in America learn to read well by the end of third grade.

Teaching young children to read is the most critical educational priority facing this country. Encouragingly, this is an area where some of the best and most rigorous scientifically based research is available. The Reading First program will help States and districts apply this research—and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with the research—to teach all children to read. By teaching all children to read well by the end of third grade, we will ensure that all students advance to later grades well prepared to achieve their full academic potential.

The Reading First program will provide the necessary assistance to States and districts to establish research-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade for more information on instructional programs). Reading First funds will also focus on providing significantly increased teacher professional development to ensure all teachers, including special education teachers, have the skills they need to teach these programs effectively. Additionally, the program provides assistance to States and districts in preparing classroom teachers to effectively screen, identify and overcome reading barriers facing their students.

Quite simply, Reading First focuses on what works, and will support proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms. The program provides assistance to States and districts in selecting or developing effective instructional materials, programs, learning systems and strategies to implement methods that have been proven to teach reading. Reading First also provides assistance for the selection and administration of screening, diagnostic and classroom-based instructional reading assessments with proven validity and reliability, in order to measure where students are and monitor their progress.

Taken together, the complementary research-based programs, practices and tools required by Reading First will give teachers across the nation the skills and support they need to teach all children to read fluently by the end of the third grade.

2. What are the essential elements of reading instruction?

Scientifically based reading research (SBRR) has identified 5 essential elements of effective reading instruction. To ensure that children learn to read well, explicit and systemic instruction must be provided in these five areas:

1. **Phonemic Awareness** – The ability to hear, identify and manipulate the individual sounds—phonemes—spoken words. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words.
2. **Phonics** – The understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes—the sounds of spoken language—and graphemes—the letters and spellings that represent those sounds in written language. Readers use these relationships to recognize familiar words accurately and automatically and to decode unfamiliar words.
3. **Vocabulary Development** – Development of stored information about the meanings and pronunciation of words necessary for communication. There are four types of vocabulary:

- * Listening vocabulary—the words needed to understand what is heard
- * Speaking vocabulary—the words used when speaking
- * Reading vocabulary—the words needed to understand what is read
- * Writing vocabulary—the words used in writing

4. **Reading fluency, including oral reading skills** – Fluency is the ability to read text accurately and quickly. It provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time.
5. **Reading comprehension strategies** – Strategies for understanding, remembering, and communicating with others about what has been read. Comprehension strategies are sets of steps that purposeful, active readers use to make sense of text.

Appendix A summarizes the key findings from scientifically based research on the essential components of reading instruction. More specific information about each of the essential components can also be found in Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read Kindergarten Through Grade 3 (2001).

3. What is scientifically based reading research?

Scientifically based reading research is research that applies rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties. This includes research that:

- a. Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- b. Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- c. Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
- d. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

4. What evidence is critical in evaluating scientifically based reading research?

When reviewing research findings to determine whether they meet the criteria for scientifically based reading research, State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools should consider the extent to which the research meets each of the criteria. Questions for consideration about each criterion include:

- a. **Use of rigorous, systematic and empirical methods** – Does the work have a solid theoretical or research foundation? Was it carefully designed to avoid biased findings and unwarranted claims of effectiveness? Does the research clearly delineate how it was conducted, by whom it was conducted, and on whom it was conducted?
- b. **Adequacy of the data analyses to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn** – Was the research designed to minimize alternative explanations for observed effects? Are the observed effects consistent with the overall conclusions and claims of effectiveness? Does the research present convincing documentation that the observed results were the result of the intervention? Does the research make clear what populations were studied (i.e., does it describe the participants' ages, as well as their demographic, cognitive, academic and behavioral characteristics) and does it describe to whom the findings can be generalized? Does the study provide a full description of the outcome measures?

- c. Reliance on measurements or observational methods that provided valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations** – Are the data based on a single-investigator, single-classroom study, or were similar data collected by multiple investigators in numerous locations? What procedures were in place to minimize researcher biases? Do observed results “hold up” over time? Are the study interventions described in sufficient detail to allow for replicability?
- d. Acceptance by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparable rigorous, objective and scientific review** – Has the research been carefully reviewed by unbiased individuals who were not part of the research study? Have the findings been subjected to external scrutiny and verification?

5. What are the key elements of an effective reading program based on scientifically based reading research?

A high-quality reading program that is based on scientifically based research must include instructional content based on the five essential components of reading instruction integrated into a coherent instructional design. A coherent design includes explicit instructional strategies that address students’ specific strengths and weaknesses, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities and aligned student materials, and may include the use of targeted, scientifically based instructional strategies as appropriate. The design should also consider the allocation of time, including a protected, uninterrupted block of time for reading instruction of more than 90 minutes per day.

A high-quality reading program also includes assessment strategies for diagnosing student needs and measuring progress, as well as a professional development plan that ensures teachers have the skills and support necessary to implement the program effectively and to meet the reading needs of individual students.

6. What practices and strategies for classroom instruction should be evident in implementing a high-quality reading program based on scientifically based reading research?

Certain elements should be visible in any Reading First classroom in the country, regardless of which specific program is in use. Standards and accountability are the foundation of the Reading First classroom. Expectations are clear, as are strategies for monitoring progress toward meeting them. A comprehensive reading program provides the basis for instruction, and connects meaningfully to supplemental materials. In-class grouping strategies are in use, including small group instruction as appropriate to meet student needs. Student placement in groups is flexible, with placement and movement based on ongoing assessment, and different curricula may be in use to instruct different groups. There is active student engagement in a variety of reading-based activities, which connect to the five essential components of reading and to overall, clearly articulated academic goals. Effective classroom management and high levels of time on task are also evident.

7. What practices and strategies for professional development should be evident in an effective reading program?

Professional development related to a high-quality, effective reading program should aim to increase student achievement by enabling and ensuring the implementation of the particular program(s). Research has shown that teachers who participate in well-designed professional development activities get better results from their students. Well-designed professional development aligns clearly with the instructional program, including its research base, as well as with State academic and performance standards. Adequate time must be available for teachers to learn new concepts and to practice what they have learned. Coaches, mentors, peers and outside experts provide feedback as new concepts are put into practice. Professional development must prepare all teachers to teach all of the essential components of reading instruction, and to know how they are related, the progression in which they should be taught, and the underlying structure of the English language. Teachers also must understand why some children have difficulty learning to read well and learn how to administer and interpret assessments of student progress. Professional development should also prepare teachers to effectively manage their classrooms and to maximize time on task.

8. What practices and strategies for assessment should be evident in an effective reading program?

A high-quality, effective reading program must include rigorous assessments with proven validity and reliability. These assessments must measure progress in the five essential components of reading instruction and identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are already experiencing reading difficulty. A reading program must include screening assessments, diagnostic assessments and classroom-based instructional assessments of progress. The administration of screening assessments determine which children are at risk for reading difficulty and need additional support. Diagnostic assessments provide more in-depth information on students' skills and instructional needs that forms the basis of the ideal instructional plan. Classroom-based instructional assessments determine whether students are making adequate progress or need more support to achieve grade-level reading outcomes.

B. Eligibility and Funding for Maine Reading First

1. Who may apply for Maine Reading First grant funds?

A local educational agency (LEA) that meets the following criteria during the application period up to the time of review and scoring of the application which will be by March 31, 2006, is eligible to apply to the State educational agency (SEA) for Maine Reading First grant funds:

1. The LEA is among the LEAs in the state with 61% or less of its grade four students meeting the standard (Meets and Exceeds categories) for the past year on the reading section of the fourth grade Maine Educational Assessment (MEA); **AND**
2. The LEA meets one or more of the additional criteria listed below.
 - a. Jurisdiction over an empowerment zone or enterprise community; **or**
 - b. One or more schools identified for school improvement under Title I, Part A; **or**
 - c. 36% or more students counted for Title I, Part A allocations; **or**
 - d. 700 or more students counted for Title 1, Part A allocations.

69 LEAs meet the above criteria and are eligible to apply for Reading First funds in Maine. A list of eligible LEAs is attached in Appendix B.

2. Which schools within an LEA are eligible to receive Maine Reading First funds?

LEAs must apply the following criteria when determining which school will be served.

The selected school:

- a. Must serve students in at least 2 grade levels in the K-3 grade span, **and**
- b. Be the school served by the eligible LEA with the highest percentages or numbers of students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 reading below grade level based on the most current fourth grade MEA reading data and local reading assessment data.

To ensure that the schools with the most need in eligible LEAs are selected to receive Maine Reading First funds, and to ensure that grant awards represent geographic diversity across Maine, LEAs must select one school to serve in their Reading First grant application. If the students in the grades to be served are taught in 2 separate school buildings, the grant award may be used in the 2 school buildings in which the students to be served are taught.

Eligible LEAs may apply for grant funds for additional schools in subsequent Reading First grant award cycles.

3. May a consortium of local educational agencies apply to the MDOE for Maine Reading First funds?

Yes, consistent with Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) requirements, two or more local educational agencies may apply to the MDOE as a consortium. Each LEA within the consortium must meet the eligibility requirements outlined above.

4. Are there any required priorities for awarding Maine Reading First grants?

In making awards to local educational agencies, the MDOE will give priority to eligible LEAs that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. At least fifteen percent of the students served by the eligible LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line; or
- b. At least 6,500 children served by the eligible LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line.

5. Are there any other competitive priorities for awarding Maine Reading First grants?

The MDOE will award competitive priority to any LEA that is a recipient of an *Early Reading First* grant, or that combines local and/or State funds with Reading First funds to implement one of the following:

- a Family Literacy program;
- all day or extended day Kindergarten;
- reduction of class sizes in K-3 classrooms to below 20 students; and/or
- hires a certified literacy specialist for the Literacy Coach and/or intervention specialist position(s).

However, failure to meet these criteria will not preclude any LEA from competing for or receiving a Maine Reading First grant.

6. What is the length of the Maine Reading First grant period?

Grants will be awarded for a three-year period, subject to an annual demonstration of adequate yearly progress (AYP) in reading. The grant year will run from May 2006 through June 2007 in Year 1 and from July 2007 through June 2008 in Year 2 and from July 2008 through June 2009 in Year 3.

7. What is the minimum amount of Maine Reading First funds that a LEA may receive?

Maine has been awarded \$1,463,451 for competitive Reading First grant funding to eligible LEAs. Based on a K-3 student population of 300-400, the amount of funds awarded to schools will be approximately \$400,000 over the three-year grant period (approximately \$150,000 in years 1 and 2, approximately \$100,000 in year 3). The number of grants disbursed will be based on the amount of funding available and the LEAs that successfully compete for the grant.

Each LEA that receives a competitive subgrant will receive at least the same percentage of the State's total Maine Reading First subgrant funds as the LEA received of the total Title I, Part A funds received by all LEAs in the State for the preceding fiscal year. For example, if an LEA received 3 percent of the total amount of the State's Title I, Part A funds in FY 2004, that LEA will receive at least 3 percent of the total amount of Reading First funds subgranted in the State in FY 2005.

8. On what basis does a State educational agency (SEA) make continuation awards to local educational agencies?

The MDOE will assess the progress each LEA has made in improving student reading achievement and implementing the project as outlined in its subgrant application during each year of its three year grant period.

9. Will the MDOE discontinue funding to a local educational agency that is not making substantial progress?

Yes, the MDOE may discontinue funding to any LEA that is not making substantial progress in improving student reading achievement and implementing the program outlined in its subgrant application.

12. Are public charter schools eligible to participate in the Maine Reading First program?

Yes, charter schools that are LEAs or public schools within LEAs may apply.

11. May charter schools that are not local educational agencies apply directly to the MDOE for Maine Reading First subgrants?

No. Only LEAs may apply directly to the MDOE for Maine Reading First funds. A charter school that is not an LEA under State law may not apply directly to the State for funding.

12. Are private school children eligible to participate in the Maine Reading First Program?

Yes, funds awarded to LEAs under Maine Reading First are subject to the requirements of Section 9501 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Participation by Private School Children and Teachers). The statute requires LEAs to provide private school children and their teachers or other educational personnel with educational services that address their needs related to Maine Reading First on an equitable basis with public school children and teachers. LEAs must provide these services in a timely manner.

Funds provided for educational services and other benefits for private school children and their teachers must be equal, taking into account the number and educational needs of the children to be served, to the funds provided for participating public school children.

All services and benefits provided to private school children and their teachers under Maine Reading First must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

LEAs seeking Maine Reading First grants must consult with appropriate private school officials during the design and development of their Maine Reading First plans on such issues as determining eligibility of private school children; identifying the children's needs; what services will be offered; how, where, and by whom services will be provided; and how the student performance will be assessed.

13. May schools that do not serve Kindergarten through grade three, such as pre-kindergarten programs, middle schools, junior high schools, or high schools receive funds?

No, the purpose of the Maine Reading First program is to ensure that every student can read at grade level or above by the end of Grade 3. Only schools that include at least 2 grades in the grade K-3 span may receive Maine Reading First funds. Schools that include additional grades may only use Maine Reading First funds for purposes related to Kindergarten through Grade 3 instruction. An exception applies to professional development for K-12 special education teachers. LEAs must provide professional development on the 5 essential elements of reading instruction to all K-12 special education teachers, including those based in middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools.

14. May LEAs use Maine Reading First funds to cover costs for administrative expenses and evaluation activities?

Yes, eligible LEAs may use up to 3.5% of their Reading First funds for administration and evaluation purposes.

C. LEA Reading First Proposals

1. What federal guidelines exist for Maine Reading First grant activities?

The following federal guidelines apply:

a. Use of funds

- Funds must be used to supplement and not supplant any moneys currently being used to provide eligible students with reading services or programs.
- LEAs must use Reading First funds only for activities based on scientifically based reading research (SBRR).
- No planning activities may be funded by this program.

b. Program Design

An eligible LEA must submit an application to the MDOE in order to be considered for Maine Reading First funding. Applications must demonstrate how the LEA will use Maine Reading First funds to carry out the following required activities:

1. Instructional reading assessments—Selection and administration of rigorous screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments with proven validity and reliability and how information from these assessments will be used to make instructional decisions. These assessments must measure progress in the essential components of reading instruction and identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are already experiencing reading difficulty.
2. Reading program—Selection and implementation of a program of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research that includes the essential components of reading instruction and provides such instruction to children in Kindergarten through Grade 3 in the schools served by the LEA, including children:
 - a. With reading difficulties;
 - b. At risk of referral to special education based on those difficulties;
 - c. Evaluated under section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) but not identified as having a disability (in accordance with IDEA section 614(b)(5) and as defined in section 602);
 - d. Served under IDEA primarily due to a specific learning disability related to reading (as defined in IDEA section 602);
 - e. Deficient in the 5 essential components of reading instruction; and/or
 - f. Identified as having limited English proficiency.

A high-quality reading program that is based on scientifically based research must include instructional content based on the 5 essential components of reading instruction integrated into a coherent instructional design. A coherent design includes explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequence, ample practice opportunities and aligned students materials. The design should also include the allocation of time, ensuring a protected, dedicated block of time for reading instruction.

LEAs must demonstrate how this reading program will be implemented, and that it will not be layered on top of non-research based programs already in use. The scientifically based reading program must also align to State academic and performance standards to ensure that students will be able to reach the proficiency level on State assessments.

3. Instructional materials—Selection and implementation of instructional materials, including education technology such as software and other digital curricula, that are based on scientifically based reading research.

4. Professional development—Professional development for teachers of Kindergarten through Grade 3 and special education teachers of Kindergarten through Grade 12 that will prepare these teachers and other instructional staff in all of the essential elements of reading instruction and in the use of selected instructional materials. Professional development must clearly align with the instructional program, including its research base, as well as with State academic and performance standards, and include adequate time for teachers to learn new concepts and to practice what they have learned. Professional development must be an ongoing, continuous activity, and not consist of “one-shot” workshops or lectures. Delivery mechanisms must include the use of literacy coaches who provide feedback as instructional strategies are put into practice. Providers of professional development must base training in reading instruction on scientifically based reading research. Professional development must be delivered by eligible providers and must address:
 - Information, instruction materials, programs, strategies, and approaches based on scientifically based reading research, including early intervention, classroom reading materials, and remedial programs and approaches; and
 - Instruction in the use of screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments and other procedures that effectively identify students who may be at risk for reading failure or who are having difficulty reading.
5. Evaluation Strategies—Collection and summary of valid and reliable data to document the effectiveness of Maine Reading First in individual schools and in the LEA as a whole and to stimulate and accelerate improvement by identifying the schools that produce significant gains in reading achievement.
6. Reporting—LEAs must report data for all students and categories of students described in the State’s adequate yearly progress (AYP) definition.
7. Access to reading material—Promotion of reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material.

The federal review process for awarding Reading First grants to States applied additional requirements related to the design of local Reading First programs, such as instructional leadership and district-provided technical assistance. The rubric that the State (operating through an Expert Review Panel) will apply to review local subgrant applications incorporates all of these federal requirements.

2. What are the required components of Maine’s Reading First subgrant proposals?

LEAs seeking approval for funding under Maine Reading First will be required to implement several critical components in their grant applications. These components are as follows:

d. Organization of a local Reading First Leadership Team

Implementation of local Maine Reading First grants will be monitored through the utilization of a local Reading First Leadership Team. Members of the Team must represent the following: an LEA administrator, the building principal, 1-3 classroom teachers from the K-3 instructional staff, Title I staff, the Literacy Coach, a Special Educator, an Intervention specialist, a Family Literacy educator (if applicable), the Librarian, English as a Second Language staff (if applicable), and a school board member. The local Reading First Leadership Team will engage in ongoing professional development, as outlined in the professional development section below, and work collaboratively with school and LEA staff to accomplish the goals of Maine Reading First. The local Reading First Leadership Team will meet monthly to discuss the progress of the local Reading First project and make decisions regarding adjustments to the plan as necessary.

e. Implementation of Reading Assessment Plan

To ensure consistency of data collection across Reading First schools, adequate assessment of the essential components of SBRR instruction, and flexibility for schools in the design of their local systems of assessment, the Maine Department of Education will work with Reading First schools to develop Reading First assessment plans. All Maine Reading First schools will use screening assessments at the beginning of the year, progress monitoring assessments during the year, diagnostic assessments as needed throughout the year, and outcome measures at the end of the year. Further, they will be asked to adhere to the following schedule for outcome assessments of each essential reading element across the K-3 grade span:

End of Kindergarten—phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary

End of Grade 1—phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension

End of Grade 2—phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension

End of Grade 3—vocabulary, fluency, comprehension

All Maine Reading First schools will be required to use two common assessment tools to measure outcomes—selected components of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS), 6th Edition and of the Terra Nova, 2nd Edition. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills, 6th Edition (DIBELS) will serve as a tool for assessing phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency, while the Terra Nova will assess phonics, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension.

In addition to using these outcome measures, LEAs will be required to use some components of the DIBELS as screening and progress monitoring assessments for phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency at appropriate grade levels. They will also be required to select screening and progress monitoring assessments for vocabulary and comprehension, as well as diagnostic assessments for all 5 essential components, from a list of reviewed assessments found in Final Report: Analysis of Reading Assessment Instruments for K-3 (Kame'enui, 2002) at the following web site: <http://idea.uoregon.edu/assessment/index.html>. This website link can also be accessed in Appendix C. As this list is updated, the Maine Reading First staff will provide current information to LEAs. Figure 1 details the schedule of assessments that will be required by Reading First schools to ensure that common outcome measures, as well as some common screening and progress monitoring tools, are used. It also indicates where schools must select screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments.

Maine Reading First Assessment Plan

Grade Level	Essential Reading Component	Fall Screening	Diagnostic As Needed	Progress Monitoring & Winter Benchmarks	Spring Outcomes
Kindergarten	Phonemic Awareness	DIBELS-Initial Sounds Fluency	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Test
	Phonics	DIBELS-Letter Naming Fluency	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Letter Naming Fluency & Nonsense Word Fluency	DIBELS-Letter Naming Fluency & Nonsense Word Fluency
	Vocabulary Development	DIBELS-Word Use Fluency or <i>School Selected</i> Peabody Picture Vocabulary	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Word Use Fluency or <i>School Selected</i>	Terra Nova
	Reading Fluency	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Comprehension	NA	NA	NA	NA
Grade 1	Phonemic Awareness	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency
	Phonics	DIBELS-Nonsense Word Fluency	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Nonsense Word Fluency	DIBELS-Nonsense Word Fluency
	Vocabulary Development	DIBELS-Word Use Fluency or <i>School selected</i>	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Word Use Fluency or <i>School selected</i>	Terra Nova
	Reading Fluency	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency

Grade Level	Essential Reading Component	Fall Screening	Diagnostic As Needed	Progress Monitoring & Winter Benchmarks	Spring Outcomes
	Comprehension	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency Retell or <i>School Selected</i>	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency Retell or <i>School Selected</i>	Terra Nova
Grade 2	Phonemic Awareness	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency *	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency *	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency *
	Phonics	DIBELS-Nonsense Word Fluency	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Nonsense Word Fluency	Terra Nova
	Vocabulary Development	DIBELS-Word Use Fluency or <i>School Selected</i>	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Word Use Fluency or <i>School Selected</i>	Terra Nova
	Reading Fluency	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency
	Comprehension	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency Retell or <i>School Selected</i>	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency Retell or <i>School Selected</i>	Terra Nova
Grade 3	Phonemic Awareness	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency *	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency *	DIBELS-Phoneme Segmentation Fluency *
	Phonics	DIBELS-Nonsense Word Fluency*	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Nonsense Word Fluency*	Terra Nova

Grade Level	Essential Reading Component	Fall Screening	Diagnostic As Needed	Progress Monitoring & Winter Benchmarks	Spring Outcomes
	Vocabulary Development	DIBELS-Word Use Fluency or <i>School Selected</i>	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Word Use Fluency or <i>School Selected</i>	Terra Nova
	Reading Fluency	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency
	Comprehension	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency Retell or <i>School Selected</i>	<i>School selected</i> Recommended: Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA) or Fox in a Box	DIBELS-Oral Reading Fluency Retell or <i>School Selected</i>	Terra Nova

* Indicates to use the assessment tool as necessary with at risk students.

Figure 1

The Maine Department of Education will provide LEAs with technical assistance to help them select assessments to include in their plans. In its application, the LEA will be asked to specify the assessments that it will utilize in addition to the State required outcome, screening, and progress monitoring assessments. If the assessment selected is not included on the list provided in Final Report: Analysis of Reading Assessment Instruments for K-3 (Kame'enui, 2002), the LEA must be able to demonstrate the assessments'

- reliability, validity, and purposes (screening, diagnosis, and/or progress monitoring);
- adherence to SBRR;
- alignment with the 5 essential elements of reading; and
- usefulness for improving instruction.

In the description of their assessment plan, LEAs must specify how results from screening, diagnostic, classroom-based, and outcome assessments will be used to inform instructional decision-making. The application must address and elaborate upon the following minimum requirements:

- Screening assessments: Data will be used to make initial instructional plans for the whole class and small groups. In the cases of students entering the class after the initial screening, screening data will be used for placement.
- Diagnostic assessments: Data will be used to determine the nature of reading difficulties of children not making adequate progress and to help teachers determine how to adjust instruction to find strategies that work.

- Classroom-based, progress monitoring assessments: Data will be used to monitor progress and instruction when needed.
- Outcome assessments: Data will be used to determine student achievement and instructional effectiveness over time.

LEAs must include a timeline or matrix showing when each assessment will be administered at each grade level. The LEA may choose when and how often to administer these assessments, provided they meet the following minimum requirements found in the chart in Figure 1 and noted below:

- Screening assessments: At the beginning of the school year or upon transferring into the school.
- Diagnostic assessments: After it has been determined which students are experiencing special difficulties learning to read.

Finally, as part of their assessment plan, LEAs must specify who is responsible for implementing each part of the assessment plan and provide a timeline showing time frames for administration of each assessment. LEAs must also include a description of how the assessments will be implemented that includes an explanation of the administration of the assessments as well as how data will be reported and used.

Administration of Assessments

LEAs must establish reliable methods of administering and scoring assessments, as well as entering and managing their assessment data. The plans must indicate the protocols for assessment administration and data collection, as well as who will provide the training in administration and interpretation of the assessments to teachers and Literacy Coaches and when it will occur. The Maine Department of Education will provide Reading First schools with professional development for administering the State-selected screening and outcome measures. LEAs must also plan for ongoing professional development for teachers who need to learn additional assessment tools they select for their assessment plans. It is important for validity and reliability that appropriate procedures for administering and interpreting these assessments be followed. The goal of this ongoing professional development will be two-fold—first, to assist teachers in becoming skillful in administering assessments and second, to help them become competent at using assessment information to inform instruction. Additionally, LEAs may budget to utilize palm pilot technology as a method for administering DIBELS assessments and organizing DIBELS data collection.

Information Reporting and Use

LEAs must disaggregate their reading assessment data to determine the sub-groups within student populations who may need interventions because they are at risk for reading failure. Subgroups for which LEAs must report reading assessment data follow NCLB guidelines and include student gender, student race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency. LEAs will determine when and how outcome data will be disseminated to teachers, and must provide professional development to teachers and administrators on how to use data to inform instruction. Time should be scheduled regularly for teachers to examine scores and incorporate the information into instruction.

Each LEA's mixture of assessments and schedule of assessment should measure progress in the five essential elements of reading instruction and provide early identification of students who are experiencing reading difficulty. This early identification will allow schools to provide appropriate interventions to ensure these students will meet Maine's *Learning Results*.

f. Implementation of Instructional Reading Strategies and Program

Designing comprehensive reading programs that are sequential, meet the needs of a variety of learners, and are grounded in SBRR is a complex undertaking for educators. To ensure that Maine Reading First schools select reading programs and materials that enable all K-3 students to reach reading proficiency, the Maine Department of Education will support schools in this selection process through two requirements. One requirement will be adoption of a comprehensive reading program for all K-3 educators. The other requirement is participation in the University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership. Both of these requirements are described in detail below.

Requirement 1: Selection of a Scientifically Based Comprehensive Reading Program

One of the foundational pieces in the design of a comprehensive reading program is the selection of scientifically based materials that insure a comprehensive, sequential approach to instruction and that adequately addresses the 5 essential components of reading. Selecting materials that will support the design of a scientifically based, comprehensive reading program requires extensive training, all of which will not be accomplished prior to schools writing their grant applications.

To ensure that the schools that receive Reading First subgrants have:

- a high quality, scientifically based reading program that provides a comprehensive response to student-learning needs in the essential components of reading instruction;
- a reading program that aligns with the Maine Literacy Partnership framework and English Language Arts performance indicators contained in the *Learning Results*;
- a coordinated sequence of explicit instruction across K-3 classrooms;
- flexibility for grouping students and selecting materials to meet individual learning needs; and
- clear guidance for teachers in the implementation of the program, including ongoing professional development,

Maine will require Reading First schools to select one of two comprehensive reading programs the Maine Department of Education has determined are aligned with Maine's *Learning Results* performance indicators for English Language Arts, meet the reliability and validity standards outlined by the National Reading Panel, and are comprehensive in their approach to the 5 essential elements of literacy instruction. In examining and selecting the comprehensive reading programs from which Reading First schools must select, the Maine Department of Education developed a set of criteria based on A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis (Simmons and Kame'enui). These criteria and a comparison of the two programs from which schools may select can be found in Appendix D.

Maine views the selection of one of these reading programs as a supportive piece in the development of a comprehensive, school-wide literacy program. By itself, selection of any reading program will not ensure that student achievement increases, but as part of a package that includes ongoing professional development through the Maine Literacy Partnership (described in Requirement 2) and use of the previously outlined assessment tools to diagnose and monitor student progress, strong literacy achievement can be realized.

To assist eligible LEAs in the selection of a comprehensive program, the Maine Department of Education will provide a technical assistance workshop during the grant-writing phase to help Leadership Teams begin to learn how to critically review their school's current reading program and/or instructional materials against the same criteria used by the Maine Department of Education (Appendix D). Applying these criteria as part of their needs assessment will allow schools to determine if their current reading program materials are scientifically based, address the 5 essential elements, and provide a coherent instructional design. Following

this review, schools will complete a planning sheet (Appendix D) in which they will map out which, if any, of their current reading program materials meet the criteria and will also identify gaps.

Upon completing this work, schools will be in a better position to select one of the required comprehensive reading programs the Maine Department of Education has selected. When describing the comprehensive program they will adopt, LEAs must explain how the program aligns with the needs of students and teachers, including their local curriculum. In addition, LEAs must document that the required program they adopt will not be layered on top of already existing programs, but will instead be the primary program used across K-3 classrooms. K-3 teachers and special educators, school administrators, and Literacy Coaches in Reading First Schools will be required to participate in training in the use of the comprehensive reading program they select. This training will occur during the summer prior to implementation of the program, as well as in additional training sessions throughout the school year.

In their grant applications, LEAs will be asked to budget Reading First funds for instructional program materials over the first two years of the grant period. This will allow LEAs to purchase the comprehensive reading programs required by the Maine Department of Education during the first year. During the second year of the grant, the Maine Department of Education Reading First coordinators will hold another technical assistance workshop in conjunction with University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership Trainers during which time schools will be encouraged to review their instructional materials and student reading performance in order to purchase additional SBRR instructional materials that will enhance their comprehensive reading programs and result in a coherent instructional design to support the needs of their students. In addition, schools will be supported in examining and adding high quality print materials to classroom and school libraries to support students as they practice reading. The criteria for reviewing reading program materials found in Appendix D will be required as the tool Reading First schools must use when examining and purchasing all reading instruction materials.

Requirement 2: Participation in the Maine Literacy Partnership

One of the overarching goals of Maine's Reading First Initiative is to help schools that receive the competitive subgrants develop comprehensive school wide reading programs in grades K-3 that not only result in high literacy achievement for students, but also provide ongoing professional development for teachers. Further, while Reading First schools will receive funding over the course of several years, Maine wants to realize benefits for these schools well beyond those years. Requirement 1, the adoption of a comprehensive reading program, that is described above is one step that will foster a systematic, coherent instructional design across K-3 classrooms. Yet, Maine wants to assist schools that receive Reading First subgrants in sustaining achievement over time by helping them develop school wide literacy programs that:

- provide ongoing professional development for teachers,
- insure a consistent vision for high literacy achievement,
- engage in frequent examination of progress over time,
- utilize scientifically based reading instruction and assessment practices, and
- develop local capacity to sustain practices and achievements in the years to come.

The LEA's eligible school will be required to join the Maine Literacy Partnership. In this K-3 school-wide framework, teachers engage in an integrated approach to teaching literacy that includes explicit reading, writing, and word study instruction. Schools that participate in the Maine Literacy Partnership framework make long-term commitments to school change and the improvement of literacy learning. Through professional development and school-based leadership, teachers and administrators work toward the goal of early literacy success for all children. Maine Literacy Partnership schools also engage in systematic assessment to inform instruction and monitor student progress over time. Further, participation in the Maine

Literacy Partnership links schools to state and national networks composed of university, school, and district partners that ensure systematic support for data analysis and feedback, ongoing professional development, and access to current scientifically based research so that literacy programs are continuously improved.

Implementation of the Maine Literacy Partnership Framework occurs systematically according to the following schedule:

Year 1

- ❑ Training of Literacy Coach in SBRR instruction and assessment practices that support the 5 essential reading components,
- ❑ Creation of school based literacy team,
- ❑ Introduction of school personnel to the Maine Literacy Partnership framework that includes SBRR instruction and assessment practices that support the 5 essential reading components,
- ❑ Organization of scheduling in K-3 classrooms to ensure uninterrupted blocks for literacy instruction (two hours in length),
- ❑ Creation of a school book room,
- ❑ Collection of baseline data, and
- ❑ Formation of a home/school literacy program.

Year 2

- ❑ Literacy Coach teaches year-long professional development course for all K-3 teachers that addresses SBRR instruction and assessment practices that support the 5 essential reading components,
- ❑ Literacy Coach coaches teachers in SBRR instruction and assessment practices that support the 5 essential reading components,
- ❑ Continued development of bookroom and purchase of scientifically based reading materials to stock bookroom,
- ❑ Collection/analysis of literacy data, and
- ❑ Implementation of a home/school literacy program.

Year 3

- ❑ Literacy Coach and teachers continue ongoing professional development experiences related to SBRR instruction and assessment practices that support the 5 essential reading components,
- ❑ Literacy Coach continues coaching teachers in SBRR instruction and assessment practices that support the 5 essential reading components,
- ❑ Literacy Coach and teachers engage in video analysis of their own teaching,
- ❑ Additional scientifically based literacy materials are added to the school bookroom, and
- ❑ Data is collected and analyzed.

The Maine Literacy Partnership supports not only instructional literacy practices in K-3 classrooms, but also ongoing professional development through the training of an in-school Literacy Coach who supports teachers as they utilize scientifically based reading instruction. The Literacy Coach practices his or her skills by daily teaching in a primary grade classroom that serves as a model for other educators to observe. Literacy Coaches also support other teachers by coaching them in their instructional practices. Literacy Coaches must be certified teachers who have demonstrated evidence of successful teaching and leadership in the K-3 grade span and who hold Master's degrees or 21 graduate credits toward a Master's degree. Maine schools applying for Reading First subgrants will be given competitive priority if they can also insure that the person who will train as their Literacy Coach is a certified literacy specialist. Literacy Coaches complete seven weeks of training (9 graduate credits) throughout the first year of their school's participation in the Maine Literacy Partnership. This training provides them with extensive opportunities to build their knowledge of SBRR and the 5 essential elements of reading. In addition, it trains them in how to analyze the content of reading programs and materials for the 5 essential elements of reading and select materials that support a

coherent instructional design. Literacy Coaches also provide the following supports to their schools over the course of the commitment:

- Teach a 3-credit course for all K-3 teachers that focuses on scientifically based literacy instruction and assessment practices;
- Provide ongoing professional development for teachers who have completed the initial course;
- Provide regularly scheduled coaching sessions for K-3 teachers during the initial course and ongoing coaching sessions during subsequent years for teachers who have completed the initial course;
- Teach children in classrooms for a minimum of 2 hours a day;
- Oversee, organize, and take responsibility for data gathering and reporting;
- Monitor and assess implementation of literacy framework in classrooms;
- Guide classroom use of SBRR comprehensive reading instructional program materials;
- Work with the school literacy team on all aspects of school-wide literacy programming;
- Receive site visits by the University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership trainer; and
- Participate in a minimum of 7 days of professional development a year after the initial year's training that is provided by the University of Maine and annually attend at least one literacy conference.

Through participation in the Maine Literacy Partnership, teachers are trained in scientifically based instructional practices that address the 5 essential elements of reading instruction, as well as writing instruction and word study, through a coherent instructional design. These features of the Maine Literacy Partnership Model are described in greater detail in Appendix E.

d. Supplemental and Intervention Materials

Supplemental Materials

If an LEA chooses to supplement or extend the comprehensive reading program they select for Reading First schools with additional high quality instructional materials, it is critical that the LEA show how the support materials are integral to the overall program to help all children become proficient readers. The description of how schools will use the support materials should address the following questions:

- How will the materials be integrated into the instructional sequence for each grade (K-3)?
- How will the materials increase the effectiveness of the program in teaching any and all of the 5 essential components of reading?
- What purposes will the materials serve in terms of meeting the needs of all students, especially those who are not making adequate progress?

Further, Reading First schools must use the Maine Department of Education criteria adapted from A Consumer's Guide to Evaluating a Core Reading Program Grades K-3: A Critical Elements Analysis (Simmons and Kame'enui) to evaluate any additional instructional materials (Appendix D).

As described on page 21 in the section on instructional reading strategies and programs, LEAs are encouraged to budget money for supplemental materials, but may elect to wait to select these until determining student needs and receiving further technical assistance from the Maine Department of Education.

Interventions for At Risk Readers

LEAs must describe how they will address the needs of children at risk for reading failure with high quality interventions. LEAs will be required to provide clear, specific procedures for monitoring progress of students' early reading skills, beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through Grade 3, in order to identify children who may be in need of more intensive instruction and to monitor the effectiveness of the special instruction they receive. LEAs must specify how more intensive instruction will be provided to children who are identified as not making adequate progress. Specific issues that must be addressed are as follows:

- How will children be identified for additional instruction?
- Who will provide the additional instruction?
- How will the LEA ensure that assignments for additional instruction are in keeping with the instructional needs of children?
- How will the LEA ensure that the additional instruction provided to children at risk for reading difficulties is of consistently high quality and in keeping with principles derived from SBRR?

In addition, LEAs must describe how the intervention programs they select to support effective instruction in Reading First schools (e.g., special education, Title I and II, etc.) will be integrated within the overall plan to prevent reading difficulties. LEAs must show how the various programs and services provided to special populations will work in conjunction with the Reading First program. The following issues concerning special populations should be addressed:

- Specific instructional needs in reading;
- Special instructional initiatives to be coordinated to build reading and language skills for all students;
- Provisions for more intensive instruction for special-population students who are behind in the development of critical reading and language skills;
- Teacher preparation to apply instructional strategies that are sensitive to the unique instructional needs of students;
- Alignment of the reading instruction that takes place in specialized classrooms with instruction in the general education classroom;
- Plans for specialized teachers to receive professional development in reading instruction;
- Plans for reading teachers/literacy specialists to be trained in special-population strategies specifically related to reading instruction; and
- Plans for how special-population students will be assessed to monitor progress.

The research base for instructional materials used to supplement the comprehensive reading program and/or to serve as interventions for struggling readers must be documented by LEAs, and the reliability and validity of the materials must be noted. This evidence must meet the following criteria for SBRR support:

- Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
- Has been accepted by a peer-review journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.

LEAs may budget money for intervention programs but elect to wait to select them until after determining student needs and seeking technical assistance from the Maine Department of Education. If an LEA elects to wait to select specific interventions, it must still address specific issues in its grant application, namely those noted on page 25 . Additionally, while Reading Recovery may be utilized by schools as one intervention for first grade students, it may not be funded through Maine Reading First grant money as it does not meet the federal government's requirements for intervention programs.

To ensure effective coordination and implementation of high quality interventions that support children at risk of reading failure from Kindergarten through Grade 3, LEAs must use a portion of their Reading First grant to fund an Intervention Specialist position if one does not currently exist in the school seeking the grant. Schools with 12 or fewer classrooms must have at least at half-time interventionist (.5 FTE) that may be compensated with grant funds. Schools with 13 or more classrooms may fund one full time interventionist, or 2 half-time interventionists using grant funds. LEAs must be able to document the qualifications of the Intervention Specialist(s) they hire and ensure that the person(s) is a certified teacher and/or literacy specialist who is highly trained in SBRR and effective reading intervention programs and techniques based on SBRR. Expectations for the role of the Intervention Specialist(s) include the following:

- **Assessment Administration**—Administer and/or coordinate the administration of screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and outcome assessment measures
- **Assessment Training**—Provide professional development and/or technical assistance to classroom teachers and/or literacy support staff on administration of assessments
- **Data Interpretation**—Interpret assessment data for the following purposes:
 - Record and monitor student progress
 - Identify the strengths and needs of students
 - Select students who require intervention
 - Determine next steps for instruction based on data
 - Provide professional development and/or technical assistance with classroom teachers to apply the results of data to classroom instruction
 - Analyze data for patterns and trends over time
- **Intervention Materials**—Locate and become familiar with intervention materials for use in classroom and/or pull-out models
 - Provide professional development and/or technical assistance to classroom teachers and literacy support staff on the use of intervention materials
- **Intervention Instruction**—Provide intervention services to identified individual and small groups of students
 - Match intervention models and materials to individual needs of students
 - Collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure the intervention model coordinates with classroom

e. Instructional Leadership

Ensuring Leadership Commitment and Support

Leadership from LEA and school administrators is an essential support for improving reading instruction. These leaders must clearly understand and articulate the goals of Reading First to educators and parents in their communities. LEA and school leaders are an integral part of guiding the Reading First initiatives in their schools. Not only must they provide a vision for Reading First and provide ongoing monitoring of its implementation, but they must insure that teachers have sufficient time to master research based strategies and that teachers receive supportive technical assistance and professional development to improve student reading achievement.

In their grant applications, LEAs will be required to describe the role of district and school level administrators in their Reading First project. Additionally, the MDOE has set expectations for their involvement. During its overview session for schools eligible for Reading First grants, the Maine Department of Education will provide training for LEA and school leaders in the scientific basis for effective reading programs, in the implementation and management processes needed for Reading First, and in the methods of progress monitoring. In addition, as described previously, Reading First schools will be required to form a Leadership Team to oversee the implementation of Reading First. This same Team will also be an integral part of the school's participation in the Maine Literacy Partnership.

In their grant applications, LEAs must specify who will serve on their Leadership Team, the specific responsibilities each individual on the Team will have, how these responsibilities support the implementation of Reading First, the time frame for completing responsibilities, and how each Team member's responsibilities will be coordinated with those of the other Team members. This description can be provided in the form of an organizational chart. At least one of the named Team members must have sufficient authority to ensure that Reading First is implemented fully and properly. Additionally, one member of the Leadership Team must also be the Literacy Coach for the Maine Literacy Partnership. The following responsibilities, among others that might be reported, must be included in the leadership plan:

- e. Organizing and completing initial needs assessment;
- f. Providing technical assistance to schools in the evaluation of instructional materials and assessments that meet both State standards and SBRR standards;
- g. Assisting schools with outcome and benchmark setting;
- h. Developing budgets and committing human and financial resources to accomplish the goals of Reading First;
- i. Coordinating local evaluation of school progress toward Reading First goals;
- j. Analyzing and interpreting achievement data;
- k. Assisting schools to adjust their progress to improve student achievement, particularly with regard to selecting interventions for students who are not making adequate progress.

Training for Principals, Building Leaders, and other LEA Personnel

All Reading First school Leadership Team members and other essential LEA personnel will be required to attend training sessions throughout the length of the Reading First grant in the essential elements of reading and the specific instructional programs and materials in use in their buildings, including the scientific basis for them, the implementation process, and progress monitoring. In addition, these same individuals will be required to participate in a 3-day summer Leadership Academy for Leadership Teams that will focus on team building and positively effecting change in schools. The 3-day summer Leadership Academy will be held the summer prior to the first school year in which the school participates in the Reading First grant. The Leadership Team will also engage in regular meetings with Maine Department of Education Reading First consultants throughout the length of the grant period (approximately twice a year).

f. Implementation of Professional Development Plan

One of the cornerstone characteristics of the Reading First legislation is its attention to ongoing professional development for educators charged with the paramount task of teaching children to read. Effective professional development for educators cannot be accomplished in disjointed segments during periodic inservice workshops. Professional development must be viewed as an ongoing component of educators' work throughout their professional careers. In other words, professional development needs to be an integral part of the daily work in which educators are engaged. For this to happen, the school environment must support professional growth as a daily event that is shaped by the needs of students and teachers, and for which school leaders skillfully provide the resources (i.e., time, money, expertise).

One of the greatest benefits to Maine schools that receive Reading First subgrants will be the opportunities educators will have to engage in high quality, ongoing professional development. Most of the professional development educators in which Reading First schools will engage will be driven by the requirements the Maine Department of Education has put in place for participation in the subgrant process. In their school needs assessments, LEAs will be asked to examine the professional development needs of their educators in relation to the goals of Reading First. They must then describe an ongoing plan for professional development that:

- combines identified school needs with the expectations for professional development outlined in Figure 2;
- teaches K-3 regular educators and K-12 special educators content that addresses SBRR; the essential elements of reading instruction; implementing SBRR instructional programs, materials, strategies; a variety of SBRR assessment tools for screening, diagnosis, and performance outcomes; and alignment of curriculum, programs, and assessment with state standards and assessment;
- provides adequate time for teachers to learn and implement SBRR instruction and assessment practices, including time for study, observation, practice, application, and evaluation;
- provides initial and ongoing support for teachers to learn new strategies;
- targets professional development for teachers who need additional assistance with skills and strategies related to improving reading instruction; and
- uses professional development providers who are highly knowledgeable in SBRR instruction and assessment, the 5 essential components of reading, and comprehensive reading program implementation.

State required professional development components are specified in figure 2. These same components are described below the figure in greater detail.

State Required Professional Development Activities for Reading First Schools

Year 1	Professional Development Requirements
Leadership Team	Participation in Maine Department of Education technical assistance workshops that support Reading First, including initial overview session and session on selecting SBRR instruction and assessment materials
	Participation in 3 Day Summer Leadership Academy
	Participation in ongoing Leadership Team meetings with Maine Department of Education Reading First consultants and University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership trainers, including one week of training with the Maine Literacy Partnership trainers
School Educators (K-3 teachers, K-3 special educators, administrators, Literacy Coaches,	Participation in ongoing training related SBRR, the five essential components of

reading support personnel)	reading, the State required comprehensive reading instruction program and the State required reading assessments, including 2 days during the summer prior to the first year of implementation
	Participation in the State Reading First course taught by a Maine Reading First instructor
	Participation in school based Maine Literacy Partnership overview sessions taught by Literacy Coach
Literacy Coach	Participation in all Leadership Team and school-based Maine Reading First professional development activities
	7 weeks of University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership training
Year 2	
Leadership Team	Participation in all technical assistance and professional development workshops provided by Maine Department of Education Reading First consultants for Reading First schools
	Participation in Maine Literacy Partnership school based course
	Participation in ongoing Leadership Team Meetings with Maine Department of Education Reading First Consultants and Maine Literacy Partnership Trainers
Educators (K-3 teachers, K-3 special educators, administrators, reading support personnel, and Literacy Coach)	Participation in all onsite professional development/technical assistance session provided by Maine Department of Education Reading First consultants
	Participation in onsite Maine Literacy Partnership course
Teachers (K-3 teachers, K-3 special educators)	Participation in observing Literacy Coach teaching in model classroom
	Participation in coaching sessions with Literacy Coach
Literacy Coach	Participation in ongoing professional development/video analysis sessions with

	the University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership trainers
Year 3	
Leadership Team	Participation in all technical assistance and professional development workshops provided by Maine Department of Education Reading First consultants for Reading First schools
	Participation in ongoing Leadership Team meetings with Maine Department of Education Reading First consultants and Maine Literacy Partnership trainers
Educators (K-3 teachers, K-3 special educators, administrators, and reading support personnel, Literacy Coach)	Participation in all onsite professional development/technical assistance sessions provided by Maine Department of Education Reading First consultants
	Participation in onsite Maine Literacy Partnership course (if not taken previously)
Teachers (K-3 teachers, K-3 special educators)	Participation in observing Literacy Coach teaching in model classroom
	Participation in coaching sessions with Literacy Coach
Literacy Coach	Participation in ongoing professional development/video analysis sessions with the University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership trainers

Figure 2

Required Professional Development Components for Maine Reading First Schools

Leadership Team Training

The local Leadership Team that will be established by schools to monitor the implementation of the school's Reading First plan will engage in several forms of professional development throughout the grant period. In addition to attending the initial technical assistance sessions offered by the Maine Department of Education to guide schools in their selection of instructional materials and assessments, the local Leadership Teams will attend a 3 day summer Leadership Academy run by Maine Department of Education Reading First staff. The Leadership Academy will include:

- Overview of scientifically based reading research
- Overview of the five essential elements of reading
- Overview of project assurances and LEA responsibilities
- Assessment training
- Evaluation and monitoring procedures
- Leadership skill training

Throughout the grant period, the Leadership Team will meet on a monthly basis with either a Maine Department of Education Reading First consultant or the University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership trainer to receive technical assistance, review ongoing staff needs and professional development plans, and review, on a quarterly basis, progress being made with implementation of the school's Reading First plan. School Leadership Teams are also required to attend 4 days of training through the University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership during the initial year of the grant, and another day of training in year two of the grant.

Reading First Course

During each Maine Reading First school's first grant year, the K-3 teachers and K-3 special education teachers, as well as the school administrator, Literacy Coach, interventionist, and literacy support personnel must participate in the Reading First Course being offered onsite by the Maine Department of Education. LEAs will be encouraged to include non-Reading First school staff participation in this course and/or plan to offer this course in non-Reading First schools in future years.

Instructional Materials & Assessment Training

Throughout the course of the school's Reading First Grant period, Reading First schools will work collaboratively with Maine Department of Education Reading First staff, the University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership trainers, and additional State selected professional development providers who are highly knowledgeable in SBRR, the five essential reading components, and comprehensive reading program implementation to provide teachers with initial and ongoing training in the use of the State required comprehensive reading program and assessments. During the summer prior to the first year of a Reading First school's grant, K-3 teachers, K-3 special educators, literacy support personnel, school administrator(s), and the school's Literacy Coach will engage in 2 days of training in the use of the State required comprehensive reading program adopted by the school. Additionally, this same group of educators must budget time throughout the grant period for training in the use of State required and locally selected assessment tools, assessment data examination and analysis, as well as ongoing training in the use of SBRR instructional materials and State reading standards. Schools are encouraged to build professional development days into their budgets to accommodate for these training sessions.

Literacy Coaches

During the Reading First school's first year of the grant period, the school Literacy Coach will participate in an intensive, 9 graduate credits, professional development course taught by the University of Maine's Maine Literacy Partnership trainers with support from the Maine Department of Education Reading First staff. Literacy Coaches will continue to participate in ongoing professional development through periodic training sessions with Maine Literacy Partnership trainers and Maine Reading First staff, and through video analysis of their own teaching throughout the grant period.

Maine Literacy Partnership School Based Course

During year 1 of the school's Reading First grant period, all K-3 teachers, K-3 special educators, literacy support personnel, as well as the school administrator will participate in a series of overview sessions about the Maine Literacy Partnership. During years 2 and 3 of the school's Reading First grant, all K-3 teachers, K-3 special educators, and literacy support personnel, as well as the school administrator will take turns participating in an onsite, 3 graduate credit course taught by the school's Literacy Coach.

Model Classrooms and Literacy Coaching

Throughout the grant period, the Reading First Literacy Coach for each school will teach the literacy block in a primary grade classroom. During the other half of the day, the Literacy Coach will coach teachers. The Literacy Coach's classroom will serve as a catalyst for improving teachers' practice by providing them with a classroom to observe in which a comprehensive, research based literacy program exists. Through participation in the Maine Literacy Partnership, teachers will be required to observe the model classroom several times during each school year. In addition, the Literacy Coach will regularly coach teachers in their instruction and assessment practices, providing teachers with feedback to promote their individual professional growth and build consistency of instruction across classrooms. LEAs will be encouraged to utilize the model classroom as a place for teachers from non-Reading to observe SBRR practices.

Participation in State Required Reading First Professional Development

It is the expectation of the Maine Department of Education that LEAs will provide assurances in their grant applications that at least 85% of their staff, unless otherwise noted by the Department, will consistently participate in the State required professional development activities. If consistently fewer than 85% of the staff participates, the LEA will risk losing grant funding. LEAs may elect to provide stipends of up to \$500 a year to faculty members who participate in State required professional development (this is limited to after school professional development and summer professional development).

Additional School Selected Professional Development

By far, the majority of ongoing professional development in which Reading First school educators will be engaged will be the required components described previously in this section. The professional development providers for these required components will be individuals who are highly knowledgeable in SBRR instruction and assessment, the five essential components of reading, and implementation of comprehensive reading programs. These State approved providers will include the Maine Reading First Coordinators, the Maine Reading First Technical Assistance consultants, the Maine Reading First Professional Development consultant, the Maine Literacy Partnership trainers, and the comprehensive reading program and State required assessment trainers that will be contracted by the Maine Department of Education. Additionally, trained Maine Reading First Statewide Course instructors will be available to assist with provision of professional development to Reading First schools.

LEAs are encouraged to budget for professional development in addition to that required by the State, and must clearly articulate a process for delivery to K-3 teachers and K-12 special education teachers that will include the following content:

- Implementing scientifically based instructional materials, programs, and strategies;
- 5 essential elements of reading instruction;
- Screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments;
- Alignment of curriculum, programs, and local assessment with the State reading standards and assessments;
- Targeted professional development of teachers who need additional assistance with skills and strategies related to improving reading instruction; and
- Data driven justification for why this additional professional development is necessary to support the goals of Reading First.

Furthermore, LEAs must provide evidence of the eligibility of the providers they select to provide additional professional development and receive approval from the Maine Department of Education before contracting with those providers for professional development activities funded by this grant. LEAs must be able to document that professional development providers are highly knowledgeable in SBRR instruction and assessment, the 5 essential components of reading instruction, and the design and delivery of comprehensive reading programs.

Teachers Who Need Additional Support

Maine Reading First schools will be required to monitor implementation of training and develop a plan for assisting teachers who may need targeted support to accomplish the goals of the school's reading first plan. LEAs must describe the process they will use to determine which teachers are at risk and how assistance will be provided to them to stimulate improvement. Schools can utilize the school Literacy Coach, model classroom teachers, Maine Department of Education Reading First consultants, or other resources, all of which must be documented by the LEA and approved by the Maine Department of Education.

g. Implementation of Technical Assistance Plan

In their subgrant applications, LEAs must describe their plans for providing Reading First schools with technical assistance as they implement their Reading First plans. One expectation is that LEAs will designate an individual in the district office to work collaboratively with the Reading First school's Leadership Team. This person will serve as the district liaison on the Team and will work cooperatively with the Literacy Coach and principal of each Reading First school to secure resources and technical assistance in the school's areas of need. This individual will also ensure that the professional development on SBRR being implemented in Reading First schools will be provided, as is affordable, to non-Reading First schools in the district as well.

In addition, the LEA's application must address how technical assistance will be provided, and by whom, for the following:

- setting outcomes and benchmarks to guide Reading First plans;
- analyzing data and applying it to instructional decision making;
- conducting ongoing needs assessments and providing professional development to meet needs;
- budgeting to maximize the use of financial resources;
- promoting whole-school adoption of effective methods;
- assisting with scheduling;
- facilitating school-based evaluations of Reading First; and
- coordinating the activities of Literacy Coaches, administrators, the school Leadership Team, and Maine Department of Education Reading First staff.

To assist Reading First schools, the Maine Department of Education will provide ongoing technical assistance a minimum of 10 days per year per Reading First school. Maine Reading First consultants will regularly engage grantees, at both the school and district level, in a process of examining their own progress for the purpose of adjusting program activities and goals. The Reading First school consultants will assist the school Leadership Teams, and in particular the school principal and Literacy Coach, in examining evaluation procedures and data collection to prepare annual interim and final reports related to improvement in student achievement and teaching skills.

h. Implementation of Evaluation Plan

LEAs must include a plan to evaluate the effectiveness of their Maine Reading First grant initiative. LEA's evaluation plans must include objective performance measures that are clearly related to State (see page 1) and local goals of the Reading First project, including but limited to:

- raising student achievement in grades K-3,
- conducting ongoing professional development related to SBRR with K-3 classroom teachers, K-12 special educators, literacy support staff, and school administrators,
- aligning and implementing K-3 classroom reading instruction consistent with SBRR,
- aligning and implementing K-3 reading assessment consistent with SBRR, and
- applying tenets of the Maine Reading First initiative to non-Reading First schools within the LEA.

Goals must be stated in measurable terms and must include specific objectives as well as projected timelines. LEAs should document the reliability and validity of evaluation measures in their plans.

The most important measure for State and local Maine Reading First projects is the improvement of student achievement in reading. While each Reading First school will implement their Reading First plan slightly differently, the goal remains the same for all. With this in mind, Maine Reading First schools will be required, as described previously, to implement a reading assessment plan (as described in section b on pages 14-19). Data from the assessment plan must be included in each Reading First school's project evaluation, and be disaggregated across subgroups (i.e., low income, ethnic groups, special education, etc.) of the school's population. The Maine Department of Education may discontinue funding Reading First schools that do not show progress toward meeting Reading First outcomes, particularly in regard to improving student achievement. LEA proposals need to describe how school evaluation data will be used to determine the need for intervention and/or discontinuation of grant funds based on performance.

In addition, the Maine Department of Education will require that LEAs participate in the State evaluation plan, and report out findings on State-selected outcomes. LEAs must acknowledge their willingness to participate in the State evaluation plan in their grant proposals. LEAs must also complete annual reports documenting their progress toward meeting their Reading First goals, and must meet with members of the Maine Reading First Team annually to review these reports. Assurances of the LEA commitment to completing the annual performance reports should be documented in the LEA proposal.

i. Insuring Student Access to Print Materials

Reading achievement is positively influenced by the amount of time children spend reading books. Recognizing this, it is critical that students have sufficient and appropriate materials to practice reading skills and strategies. Children need large quantities of age-appropriate print materials that represent a variety of text types and genre. The print materials should be engaging and highly readable to support children's developing fluency and encourage them to practice applying the skills and strategies they are learning through instruction. Both fiction and nonfiction texts should be abundant, allowing children to increase their understanding of the world and to increase their vocabulary.

LEAs must demonstrate in their applications how they will insure that all students in grades K-3 have sufficient and appropriate print materials. LEAs should include a description of how they will evaluate their current supply of print materials, how they will coordinate use of local, State, and federal funds to ensure they have an adequate supply of books, and how they will involve the school media/library specialist on their Leadership Team to provide assistance in evaluating and obtaining high quality print materials for the schools K-3 student population.

j. Budget Development

LEAs will be required to submit a detailed budget for the three year grant period that includes a budget narrative explaining expenditures. LEAs may use the following chart (Figure 3) as a guide to developing their budgets.

Maine Reading First Subgrant Budget Guidance

Total Amount of Maine Reading First Subgrant Funds = \$1,463,451

Grant sizes will vary with the population of the school and the number of K-3 classrooms. The following is guidance for how subgrant funds may be used. LEAs must provide a 3-year budget and budget narrative to explain the specific use of all funds. LEAs should also document where they will utilize local funds as a part of their Maine Reading First grant proposal. Salary ranges are estimates, and LEAs should use local pay scales as they budget for salary costs.

Budget Component	Schools with 12 or fewer K-3 classrooms	Schools with 13 or more K-3 classrooms
Salaries		
Literacy Coach (Salary & Benefits for .5 FTE) (Years 1-3)	\$26,000 per year	2 @ \$26,000 per year each
Intervention Specialist (Salary & Benefits) (Years 1-3)	\$26,000 per year for .5 FTE	Up to \$52,000 per year for 1 FTE or 2 @ .5 FTE
Substitutes (Years 1-3)	Up to \$5,000 per year	Up to \$7,500 per year
Stipends for Professional Development	Up to \$500 per faculty member per year	Up to \$500 per faculty member per year
Travel/Accommodations		
Literacy Coach (Year 1)	\$3,500	2 @ \$3,500 each
Literacy Coach (Years 2 & 3)	\$1,000 per year	2 @ \$1,000 each per year
Leadership Team (Year 1)	\$4,000 per year	\$4,000 per year
Leadership Team/Teachers (Years 2 & 3)	\$2,000 per year	\$2,000 per year
Professional Development		
Leadership Team (Year 1)	\$5,000	\$5,000
Literacy Coach (Year 1)	\$13,500	2 @ \$13,500 each
Teachers, Literacy Support Staff, Intervention Specialists (Year 1)	\$3,000-10,000 (varying with number of employees)	\$10,000-\$15,000 (varying with number of employees)
Costs to be considered include: ➤ Texts for Maine Reading First		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course @\$30 per teacher ➤ Training on core program and required assessments ➤ Travel & accommodations at required trainings ➤ Additional training in SBRR instruction and assessment practices 		
Teachers, Literacy Support Staff, Intervention Specialists, Literacy Coach (Years 2 & 3)	\$5,000-\$15,000 per year (varying with number of employees)	\$15,000-\$25,000 per year (varying with number of employees)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Texts for Maine Literacy Partnership Course ➤ Graduate credits for Maine Literacy Partnership Course ➤ Training on core program and required assessments ➤ Travel & accommodations at required trainings ➤ Additional training in SBRR instruction and assessment practices 		
Instructional Materials		
Teachers (Years 1 & 2)	\$3,000 per classroom	\$3,000 per classroom
Literacy Coach (Years 1 & 2)	\$4,500 per year	\$4,500 each per year
Intervention Specialist & Literacy Support Staff (Years 1 & 2)	Up to \$10,000 per year	Up to \$20,000 per year
Teachers, Literacy Coach, Intervention Specialist (Year 3)	\$2,000-\$5,000 total	\$5,000-\$10,000 total
Classroom & School Libraries (Year 3)	\$5,000-\$10,000 (varying with school population)	\$10,000-\$20,000 (varying with school population)
Assessment Materials		
Year 1	\$5,000-\$10,000 total	\$10,000-\$15,000 total
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DIBELS Materials and Database @ \$85 per classroom ➤ Terra Nova @ \$13 per student per year ➤ Peabody Picture Vocabulary Assessment @ \$160 each ➤ Diagnostic Assessments @ \$1,500 ➤ Terra Nova @ \$13 per student ➤ Optional: Wireless Generation Palm Pilot Technology @ \$1,000 per Palm Pilot 		
Years 2 & 3	\$ 500-\$7,500 per year	\$1,000-10,000 per year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ DIBELS Materials and Database @ \$85 per classroom, or ➤ DIBELS Palm Pilot Technology @ \$500 per Palm ➤ Terra Nova @ \$13 per student 		
Range of Total Awards		
Years 1 & 2	\$112,000-\$168,000	\$190,000-300,000

Year 3	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$160,000-190,000

Note: LEAs may use up to 3.5% of their Reading First funds for administration and evaluation purposes.

Figure 3

k. Competitive Priorities

Maine will, in compliance with federal law, provide competitive priority to LEAs in which:

- at least 15% of the students served in the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line; or
- at least 6500 children in the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line.

Additionally, Maine will provide competitive priority to LEAs that combine local and/or state funds with Reading First funds to do one of the following:

- implement a Family Literacy program;
- implement all day or extended day Kindergarten;
- reduce class sizes in K-3 classrooms to below 20 students;
- hire Maine certified literacy specialists for Literacy Coach and/or Intervention Specialist positions; and/or
- implement an Early Reading First program.

Family literacy programs support children's literacy development and reading achievement prior to entry to school and beyond the school day. Family Literacy teachers help coordinate the efforts of early childhood teachers, primary classroom teachers, and adult educators as they work with children and adults in families to support the literacy achievement of each individual, in addition to improving parenting skills. Maine LEAs awarded Reading Excellence Act grants were required to adopt Family Literacy programs and these programs consistently produced positive results for students' reading achievement. Family Literacy programs that are awarded funding must utilize the 4 components of Family Literacy, namely:

- Adult Literacy
- Early Childhood Literacy
- Parenting Education
- Intergenerational Literacy

All day and extended day Kindergartens provide opportunities for Kindergarten students to receive additional time for reading instruction during their first year of school. Currently, about half of Maine's elementary schools have all day or extended day Kindergartens.

Class size directly impacts student achievement. When teachers have fewer students to teach, they are better able to direct their instruction to the individual needs of each learner and provide students with the small group and individual instruction they need to make learning gains.

The National Research Council recommends that all K-3 teachers have access to a literacy specialist who has specialized knowledge of reading development, including SBRR. Literacy Coaches who already have this specialized knowledge base will be a step ahead in their ability to support other teachers as they learn SBRR.

Early Reading First grant awards support the work of LEAs in helping students enter school with the necessary skills to learn to read effectively by third grade. LEAs that have been awarded Early Reading First grants must work toward coordinating goals of those grants with the goals of Reading First grants.

Competitive priority points will only be added to LEA grants when the LEA has demonstrated they have met the requirements in all of the other required sections of this grant. Each competitive priority is worth five additional bonus points.

I. Additional Uses of Funds

LEAs that include additional uses of funds in their grant proposals above and beyond those specified in Maine's Reading First RFP will be required to document the SBRR which support the use of the funds in this way, and provide a detailed explanation for how the use of funds in this way coordinates and supports their overall Reading First plan.

D. Maine Reading First Grant Application Process

1. What process will eligible LEAs follow for applying for Maine Reading First grant funds?

Eligible LEAs will follow a two-phase process when applying for Maine Reading First grant funds.

Phase 1:

During phase 1, LEAs will be required to complete a needs assessment (Appendix F) for the school seeking Reading First subgrants. In the needs assessment, LEAs will be asked to:

1. examine the school's current reading curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices against scientifically based reading research (SBRR),
2. identify the school's current data related to
 - student literacy achievement
 - staffing
 - class sizes
 - ongoing school goals/initiatives related to literacy
 - past and current professional development initiatives
 - time devoted to literacy instruction, and
3. Identify specific strengths and needs the school will have as it engages in the goals of Reading First.

Phase 1 will require the formation of a Leadership Team (Appendix F) for the school within the LEA that is seeking funding. The school's Leadership Team will be composed of administrators from the LEA and school levels, Literacy Coach, teachers, specialists, librarians, school board members, and parents. The Leadership Team will assist in the design, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of the Reading First subgrant activities.

When submitting their intents to apply, LEAs must ensure commitment of at least 85% of the school's K-3 classroom teachers, K-3 reading interventionist and professional reading support staff, K-3 special educators; the school principal; and the school's Reading First Leadership Team members to the activities required under the Maine Reading First subgrant.

LEAs will be required to submit their needs assessment, Leadership Team roster, and the commitments of at least 85% of the school's K-3 classroom teachers, K-3 special educators, K-3 reading interventionist and professional reading support staff, the school principal, and the school's Reading First Leadership Team members to the Maine Department of Education with the Intent to Apply form by **February 10, 2006**.

Phase 2:

After completing Phase 1 activities, LEAs' applications for Reading First subgrants will be accepted for review and scoring. In their Reading First subgrant proposals, LEAs will be required to address each of the following components:

Section 1: Selection of Schools to Be Served and Needs Assessment

Section 2: Required Project Elements

- Element 1: Instructional Reading Assessments
- Element 2: Instructional Strategies and Program
- Element 3: Supplemental and Intervention Materials
- Element 4: Instructional Leadership
- Element 5: District-Provided Professional Development
- Element 6: District-Provided Technical Assistance
- Element 7: Evaluation Strategies
- Element 8: Access to Print Materials

Section 3: Management and Coherence Plan

Section 4: Budget and Budget Narrative

Section 5: Competitive Priorities

In addressing these components, LEAs must also describe their capacity to assist Reading First schools, including how the LEA will:

- Make literacy achievement for *all* students a priority by setting high expectations and a clear vision for both students and staff;
- Set attainable goals that directly support student achievement and the professional development of teachers;
- Ensure that reading instruction and assessment in Reading First schools adhere to the guidelines of SBRR and are delivered in a coherent sequence;
- Provide strong leadership support to accomplish the goals set;
- Provide flexibility in LEA procedures and policy, when necessary, to support Reading First schools; and
- Allocate resources, both human and financial, to accomplish the goals set by Reading First.

E. Technical Assistance for Maine Reading First Grants

1. Will an informational session be held to explain the Maine Reading First request for proposals?

An informational meeting for potential applicants will be held on **December 12, 2005** at the **Augusta Civic Center**. The meeting will run from 9:00-12:00. The purpose of this meeting is to provide interested parties the opportunity to discuss and have clarified the requirements of this RFP. It is

desirable that interested parties participate; however, participation is optional. Any information resulting from the informational meeting which is deemed by the Department of Education to be important or which changes the requirements will be sent in writing to all parties who have received a copy of the RFP. The Department of Education is not bound by information provided verbally.

2. What other forms of technical assistance will be available to LEAs during the grant writing process?

During the Reading First subgrant application period, the MDOE will hold a technical assistance session for eligible LEAs as they embark on the writing of their grants. A technical assistance session will be offered to help LEAs:

1. examine instructional reading programs and materials as well as assessments that meet SBRR; and
2. obtain specific answers to their grant writing questions.

The date and site of this session is **January 9, 2006 from 9:00-4:00** at the Spectacular Event Center in Bangor, Maine.

3. How will answers to questions about the Maine Reading First grant and RFP be answered?

Questions about this RFP Guidance and Requirements must be submitted in writing, and must be received at the address below prior to 5:00 p.m. EST on **February 17, 2006**.

Patrick O'Shea, Reading First Coordinator
Dept. of Education
Burton M. Cross Building, 5th Floor
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0023
Patrick.O'Shea@maine.gov
(207) 624-6661 (FAX)

Answers to written questions received on or before February 17, 2006 regarding this request will be placed on the Department of Education web site <http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/qna2006.htm> by February 28, 2006.

4. Where can additional information about SBRR be obtained?

The following web sites may be of use in accessing information on proven, research- based reading programs:

Reading First, www.readingfirstsupport.us

Partnership for Reading, <http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading>

National Reading Panel Report, <http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org>

National Institute for Literacy, <http://www.nifl.gov>

Center for Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, <http://www.ciera.org/ciera>

National Research Center on English Learning and Achievement, <http://cela.albany.edu>

International Reading Association, <http://www.reading.org>

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, <http://www.nwrel.org>

F. Maine Reading First Grant Application Format Criteria

1. What are the application components for Maine Reading First grants?

Proposals need to be submitted in the following order to assure consistent application of the evaluation criteria (Appendix G).

Part 1: Cover Page, the General Assurances and Certification Pages (with original signature), Executive Summary, and the Table of Contents

Part 2: Grant Narrative (Sections 1 – 5 as listed on page 41 and as noted in the scoring rubric in Appendix G)

2. What is the application format for Maine Reading First grants?

- The total narrative of the application must not be more than 50 pages.
- All pages must be standard letter size, 8-1/2"x 11" using 12-point font single-spaced.
- Use document footer with the name of the LEA.
- Use 1 inch margins.
- Number all pages.
- The General Assurances and Certification Pages must include an original signature of the local educational agency's authorized representative.
- Staple the pages of the original and copies in the upper left-hand corner. DO NOT use paperclips, rubber bands, report covers, or other forms of binding.

3. What is the submission requirement for letters of Intent to Apply for Maine Reading First grant funds?

Eligible LEAs that plan to submit an application for funding must complete and submit the Intent to Apply form (Appendix F) by February 10, 2006. Letters of Intent to Apply must be accompanied by the school's needs assessment, Reading First Leadership Team roster, and faculty commitments (with original signatures). LEAs that do not submit the Intent to Apply form and supporting documents will not have their applications considered for review.

4. What is the submission process for Maine Reading First Grant applications?

Please submit the original and four copies of the application to the Maine Division of Purchases.

Division of Purchases
Burton Cross State Office Building 4th Floor
111 Sewall Street
9 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0009

Completed applications must be received by the Maine Division of Purchases by 2:00 p.m. local time on **March 10, 2006**. Incomplete or late proposals will not be considered. Faxed and emailed applications will not be accepted.

G. Maine Reading First Grant Review Process

1. What will be the review process for Maine Reading First Grants?

Upon receiving Reading First subgrant applications, the MDOE will have each proposal reviewed by a minimum of three members of the Expert Review Panel. The Panel will be composed of individuals who are highly knowledgeable in scientifically based reading research and who have received training in subgrant scoring procedures.

Each panel member will award a score based on the Maine Reading First Subgrant Scoring Rubric (Appendix G). All scores for any one proposal will be totaled. A ranking of scores will establish a priority list from which recommendations for grant funds will be made. Should a tie score occur, and all proposals with that numerical ranking cannot be funded, a fourth reader will evaluate those proposals to break the tie.

It is the intent of the MDOE to fund only quality proposals that meet the intent of Reading First and that meet the standards for each required component. In the event that the number of quality proposals meeting the standard is not sufficient to exhaust the available funds, the MDOE will take the following actions:

- Nonfunded proposals will be returned to LEAs with comments and ratings from the Expert Review Panel.
- Additional technical assistance will be provided to LEAs with non-fundable proposals to support them as they revise their proposals.
- The Expert Review Panel will rescore the resubmitted proposals and fund proposals until the funds are exhausted.

H. Awarding Maine Reading First Grants

1. When will Maine Reading First Grants be awarded?

Maine Reading First Grants will be awarded by **March 31, 2006**.

2. What is the notification process for awarding Maine Reading First Grants?

LEA superintendents will be notified through written correspondence of the results of the grant competition.

3. What is the appeals process for Maine Reading First grant applications that are not funded?

Any person aggrieved by the award decision may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 M.R.S.A. Section 1825-E. The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

I. Maine Reading First Grant Evaluation and Reporting

1. What evaluation strategies will the MDOE use to document progress toward meeting the goals of Reading First?

Maine's Reading First staff will establish a system of support and monitoring for the Reading First schools through regular collaborative meetings and on-site visits by the Reading First staff. Data gathering tools for assessment will include teacher surveys, on-site observations, and student performance and assessment data.

To determine the success of the Reading First programs operated by LEAs and school that receive grants through this program, the Maine Department of Education will contract an external evaluation of the statewide Reading First initiative.

In addition, as a condition of receiving Reading First funds, the State of Maine has provided an assurance that the State and funded LEAs will participate in the national evaluation of the Reading First program upon request.